Letters to the editor
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

12/5/95

Robert Sherrill begins his review of Ronald Goldfarb's book saying "he did not intend to include a theory about the Kennedy assasssinations - who did them and why. But in fact most of 'Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes' seems constructed for the very purpose of supporting an assassination theory, which Goldfarb gives us at the end."

Sherrill also quotes Goldfarb as saying that "once" Kennedy was in "the White House" he- "or the smart alecks at CIA, with his approval -called on the mob to try to "get" Fidel Castro. It is likely that Bobby, who really hated the Cuban revolution, may have had some dealings along those lines, too."

The best reviewers cannot know all there is to know about books they review but we do have the right to expect those who write what they say is nonfiction not to make up what they believe can sell their books or excite readers or make them appear to be real-life Perry Masons.

What Goldfarb writes is false. Records the CIA was compelled to give me by the Department of Justice in response to my FOIA efforts prove Goldfarb wrote ~~was was~~ what is false. Once given to me those records were publicly available in the Department's public reading room and in the FBI's.

Robert Kennedy's first knowledge of that CIA Keystone Koppery was in 1962. He then demanded an accounting from Sheffield Edwards, the CIA's director of security. Classifying it Top Secret the CIA's general counsel, Lawrence Houston, sent the Edwards memo ~~of~~ to Kennedy on May 15, 1962 (Department of Justice File 82-46-5).

In it Edwards says that he was "approached" in August 1960 "by Mr. Richard Bissell, then Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA to explore the possibility of mounting this sensitive operation against Fidel Castro." Edwards then says "it was thought that ~~rat~~ " the mafia which had had "certain gambling interests" in Cuba, might be able to get Castro knocked off.

August 1960 was before John Kennedy was elected, not when he was in the White House. That was a plot of the Eisenhower administration.

Edwards also stated that "knowledge of this project during its life was kept to a total of six persons," all high CIA officials, " and there were no memoranda on the project nor were there written documents or agreements. The project was approved by the said senior officials of the Agency."

As the experienced lawyer he is Goldfrab did not have to have these available CIA records to be aware that at best his writing was irresponsible, that he was exploiting and commercializing the assassinations.

When lawyers lack eye-witnesses or tangible proofs they resort to motive, means and opportunity to make their cases.

Goldfrab addresses but one of these, motive. Hundreds of not thousands had the motive he attributes to the mafia only. Means and opportunity are controlling.

For all the justified dissatisfaction with the official version of the JFK assassination there is an abundance of solid information about it that has been publicly available. A decade and a half ago I had and made available to all writing in the field about a quarter of a million pages of previously-withheld FBI pages alone.

Anyone intending serious writing on the subject could not and cannot do it with total disregard of this official evidence. Not theories, evidence. From this official evidence it cannot be shown that the mafia had the means and the opportunity.

Writing about the assassination of a President or of any other public figure ought not be a fun-and-games project. The people ought not be deceived and misled by it. And certainly the dead who are not able to defend themselves ought not be maligned to puff authors up or sell more of their books.

The plain and simple truth- the official truth is that no Kennedy had either involvement in or even knowledge of that CIA plot to knock Castro off, the plot of the Eisenhower administration.

We get in this, too, another peek into the CIA. Its concept of its "security" was to have its office of security provide assassins.

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

14 FEB 1989

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21701

Reference: F80-1042

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

In the course of their processing your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding the John F. Kennedy Assassination, the Department of Justice located two CIA documents and referred them to us for our review and direct response to you.

We have completed our review of the documents and have determined that a letter with attachment dated 23 September 1965 may be released in its entirety. A copy of the document is enclosed at Tab A.

We have further determined that a memorandum with attachment dated 14 May 1962 may be released in segregable form pursuant to FOIA exemptions (b)(3) and (b)(6). A copy of the document and an explanation of exemptions are enclosed at Tab B.

The official responsible for this determination is Lee E. Carle, Information Review Officer, Directorate of Operations. You have the right to appeal this decision by addressing your appeal to the CIA Information Review Committee, in my care. Should you decide to do this, please explain the basis of your appeal.

Sincerely,

John H. Wright

John H. Wright
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

[redacted]

MEMORANDUM FOR The Hon ble Robert F. Kennedy
The Attorney General
Washington 25, D. C.

In accordance with your request of 11 May 1962, I am forwarding herewith, in the attached sealed envelope, a Top Secret memorandum by Colonel Sheffield Edwards, Director of Security, setting forth the facts on which we briefed you on 7 May 1962.

Encl.

L. R. Houston

82-416-5

LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel
CIA

(DATE)
15 MAY 1962

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
JUN 27 1962
RECORDS BRANCH
ATTORNEY GENERAL

RECORD

FORM 101 REPLACED FORM 10-101 WHICH MAY BE USED.
1 AUG 54

(47)

[redacted]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

FILE N. B.

14 May 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Arthur James Balletti et al - Unauthorized Publication or Use of Communications

1. This memorandum for the record is prepared at the request of the Attorney General of the United States following a complete oral briefing of him relative to a sensitive CIA operation conducted during the period approximately August 1960 to May 1961. In August 1960 the undersigned was approached by Mr. Richard Bissell then Deputy Director for Plans of CIA to explore the possibility of mounting this sensitive operation against Fidel Castro. It was thought that certain gambling interests which had formerly been active in Cuba might be willing and able to assist and further, might have both intelligence assets in Cuba and communications between Miami, Florida and Cuba. Accordingly, Mr. Robert Maheu, a private investigator of the firm of Maheu and King was approached by the undersigned and asked to establish contact with a member or members of the gambling syndicate to explore their capabilities. Mr. Maheu was known to have accounts with several prominent business men and organizations in the United States. Maheu was to make his approach to the syndicate as appearing to represent big business organizations which wished to protect their interests in Cuba. Mr. Maheu accordingly met and established contact with one John Rosselli of Los Angeles. Mr. Rosselli showed interest in the possibility and indicated he had some contacts in Miami that he might use. Maheu reported that John Rosselli said he was not interested in any remuneration but would seek to establish capabilities in Cuba to perform the desired project. Towards the end of September Mr. Maheu and Mr. Rosselli proceeded to Miami where, as reported, Maheu was introduced to Sam Giancana of Chicago. Sam Giancana arranged for Maheu and Rosselli to meet with a "courier" who was going back

No higher authority cited

H. Hughes

FILE N. B.

FILE N. B.

1960

82-46

CIA

[redacted]

Copy No. 1 of 1

FILE N. B.

[redacted]

Page 1 of 3 page [redacted]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTIC
22 JUN 27 1962
RECORDS BRANCH
ATTORNEY GENER

[redacted]

and forth to Havana. From information received back by the courier the proposed operation appeared to be feasible and it was decided to obtain an official Agency approval in this regard. A figure of one hundred fifty thousand dollars was set by the Agency as a payment to be made on completion of the operation and to be paid only to the principal or principals who would conduct the operation in Cuba. Maheu reported that Rosselli and Giancana emphatically stated that they wished no part of any payment. The undersigned then briefed the proper senior officials of this Agency on the proposal. Knowledge of this project during its life was kept to a total of six persons and never became a part of the project current at the time for the invasion of Cuba and there were no memoranda on the project nor were there other written documents or agreements. The project was duly orally approved by the said senior officials of the Agency.

Not high

Not high

Bay of Pigs

Not higher

2. Rosselli and Maheu spent considerable time in Miami talking with the courier. Sam Giancana was present during parts of these meetings. Several months after this period Maheu told me that Sam Giancana had asked him to put a listening device in the room of [redacted] At that time it was reported to me that Maheu passed the matter over to one Edward Du Boise, another private investigator. It appears that Arthur James Balletti was discovered in the act of installing the listening device and was arrested by the Sheriff in Las Vegas, Nevada. Maheu reported to me that he had referred the matter to Edward Du Boise on behalf of Sam Giancana. At the time of the incident neither this Agency nor the undersigned knew of the proposed technical installation. Maheu stated that Sam Giancana thought that [redacted] might know of the proposed operation and might pass on the information to [redacted] At the time that Maheu reported this to the undersigned he reported he was under surveillance by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who, he thought, were exploring his association with John Rosselli and Sam Giancana incident to the project. I told Maheu that if he was formally approached by the FBI, he could refer them to me to be briefed that he was engaged in an intelligence operation directed at Cuba.

Del Martin

not agency

How Balletti got it

3. During the period from September on through April efforts were continued by Rosselli and Maheu to proceed with the operation. The first principal in Cuba withdrew and another principal

[redacted]

Copy No. 1 of 2

[redacted]

Edwards' memo on this disclosure by CIA to m

was selected as has been briefed to The Attorney General. Ten thousand dollars was passed for expenses to the second principal. He was further furnished with approximately one thousand dollars worth of communications equipment to establish communications between his headquarters in Miami and assets in Cuba. No monies were ever paid to Rosselli and Giancana. Maheu was paid part of his expense money during the periods that he was in Miami. After the failure of the invasion of Cuba word was sent through Maheu to Rosselli to call off the operation and Rosselli was told to tell his principal that the proposal to pay one hundred fifty thousand dollars for completion of the operation had been definitely withdrawn.

4. In all this period it has been definitely established from other sources that the Cuban principals involved never discovered or believed that there was other than business and syndicate interest in the project. To the knowledge of the undersigned there were no "leaks" of any information concerning the project in the Cuban community in Miami or in Cuba.

Castro and his

5. I have no proof but it is my conclusion that Rosselli and Giancana guessed or assumed that CIA was behind the project. I never met either of them.

6. Throughout the entire period of the project John Rosselli was the dominant figure in directing action to the Cuban principals. Reasonable monitoring of his activities indicated that he gave his best efforts to carrying out the project without requiring any commitments for himself, financial or otherwise.

7. In view of the extreme sensitivity of the information set forth above, only one additional copy of this memorandum has been made and will be retained by the Agency.

[redacted]
Sheffield Edwards

[redacted]

[redacted]

Copy No. 1 of 2

[redacted]

Mr. Jonathan Yardley, book reviewer
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

Daar Mr. Yardley,

If you are also the daily book-review editor, the enclosed may be of interest to you.

My books are the only ones based on the official evidence.

A few pretend to be and some do succeed in giving that impression. But those that do make use of some of it distort what they use and its meaning in pursuance of the preconceptions with which they bgin.

If you will read - and I'm not asking if you will review, only if you will read it- I'll be glad to send you a copy of my more or less current NEVER AGAIN!

It appeared in April and I know of no mention of it anywhere.

I think you may find the information in it of use if other books supposedly on the assassination reach you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg